

1 CLAIMS

2 What is claimed is:

3 1. A system for controlling functions in an animal processing facility, the system
4 including at least one sensor is provided for sensing the presence of each animal unit, wherein
5 each of the at least one sensors is positioned at the input of a predetermined process or station
6 and for tracking each animal unit through the process or station, wherein each sensor provides a
7 corresponding animal unit sensing output, and control system having inputs and outputs for
8 coordinating at least one function of the predetermined process or system in an automated,
9 integrated manner based upon the animal unit sensing outputs.

10 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one sensor is capable of sensing the
11 presence of a animal unit and a corresponding animal unit holder.

12 3. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one sensor is capable of sensing each
13 of a series of animal unit holders.

14 4. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one sensor is capable of sensing each
15 of a series of animal unit holders and a corresponding animal unit removably held by the animal
16 unit holders.

17 5. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one sensor is capable of sensing each
18 of a series of animal unit holders and wherein the system is capable of determining whether a
19 corresponding animal unit is held thereby.

20 6. The system of claim 1, wherein the control system activates the at least one
21 function when the at least one sensor detects a predetermined number of animal unit holders each
22 of which having a corresponding animal unit held thereby.

1 7. The system of claim 1, wherein the control system deactivates the at least one
2 function when the at least one sensor detects and counts a predetermined number of animal unit
3 holders each of which not having a corresponding animal unit held thereby.

4 8. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one function is water-, gas-, power,
5 and/or equipment-related.

6 9. The system of claim 1, wherein the predetermined process includes water, power,
7 gas, and/or equipment usage.

8 10. The system of claim 1, wherein the control system controls water usage at each of
9 the predetermined processes or station based upon the animal unit outputs provided by the
10 sensors.

11 11. A method for automatically controlling at least one function in an animal
12 processing facility wherein at least one sensor is provided for sensing the presence of each
13 animal unit at the input of a predetermined process or system and for tracking each animal unit
14 through the process or system using animal unit sensing outputs, while coordinating at least one
15 function of the predetermined process or system in an automated, integrated manner based upon
16 the animal unit sensing outputs.

17 12. The method of claim 11, further including the step of the at least one sensor
18 sensing the presence of an animal unit and a corresponding animal unit holder.

19 13. The method of claim 11, further including the step of the at least one sensor
20 sensing each of a series of animal unit holders.

21 14. The method of claim 11, further including the step of the at least one sensor
22 sensing each of a series of animal unit holders and a corresponding animal unit removably held

1 by the animal unit holders.

2 15. The method of claim 11, further including the steps of the at least one sensor
3 sensing each of a series of animal unit holders and the system determining whether a
4 corresponding animal unit is held thereby.

5 16. The method of claim 11, further including the step of the control system
6 activating the at least one function when the at least one sensor detects a predetermined number
7 of animal unit holders each of which having a corresponding animal unit held thereby.

8 17. The method of claim 11, further including the step of the control system
9 deactivating the at least one function when the at least one sensor detects a predetermined
10 number of animal unit holders each of which not having a corresponding animal unit held
11 thereby.

12 18. The method of claim 11, wherein the at least one function is water-, gas-, power,
13 and/or equipment-related.

14 19. The method of claim 11, wherein the predetermined process includes water, gas,
15 power, and/or equipment usage.

16 20. The method of claim 11, further including the step of the control system
17 controlling water usage at each of the predetermined processes or station based upon the animal
18 unit outputs provided by the sensors.

19 21. A system for controlling functions in an animal processing facility, the system
20 including at least one sensor is provided for sensing the presence of each animal unit and a
21 corresponding animal unit holder and for counting the same combination, wherein each of the at
22 least one sensors is positioned at the input of a predetermined process or station and for counting

1 each animal unit through the process or station, wherein each sensor provides a corresponding
2 animal unit sensing output, and control system having inputs and outputs for coordinating at least
3 one function of the predetermined process or system in an automated, integrated manner based
4 upon the animal unit sensing outputs.

5 22. The system of claim 21, wherein the at least one sensor is capable of tracking
6 each animal unit and corresponding animal unit holder throughout the process.